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Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture



WINTER 1996

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE... TODAY

"Everybody has a different conception of the "best day of the year." Birthday, anniversary, some special occasion, or what-not. But after all is said and done, the best day of the year is today.

"Today! Really, that is all you have. Yesterday is gone forever. Tomorrow may never come. Today is here, so make the most of it. This is the day to turn your dreams into realities. No one ever won a race, climbed a mountain, or accomplished anything without starting.

"Putting off till tomorrow means indecision. Today is yours—the time for action—full of inspiration and promise. Take full advantage of it and waste it not.

"At the end of each day, review your accomplishments. Did I do the best I could? Was I considerate of the other fellow? Have I maintained my decency and self-respect?

"Not only will this improve your stature—it will also give you greater appreciation of the best day of the year—today!"

The words above by an unknown author are treasured. I found them several years ago on a well-worn scrap of paper when I cleaned out my father's desk after he had passed away.

Yes, each day is very important, particularly when one is caught up in a period of transition that is full of so many unknowns.

In the last issue of Small-Scale Agriculture Today (Fall 1995), I implied that it might be the last issue and that this writer was making plans to retire. The latter is true—my retirement date is forthcoming. However, the future status of the newsletter remains unknown.

Daily, for the past several weeks, Associates of the National Agricultural Library, the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA), and I have received and read your wonderful letters. They are from old friends as well as "the friends I've never met." Each letter is treasured.

I want to thank each and everyone for their kind words and contributions documenting the association of your family and small-scale agricultural enterprise, for OSSA. These letters really gave me a "greater appreciation of the best day of the year—today!" Thanks. (Comments of Howard W. "Bud" Kerr, Jr., Director, USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250-2244)

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

Each Day - "I believe that any man's life will be filled with constant and unexpected encouragements if he makes up his mind to do his level best each day of his life; that is, if he tries to make each day reach as nearly as possible the high-water mark of pure, unselfish, useful living." (Booker T. Washington)

Reliable Source - Johnny's Selected Seeds has available 38 medicinal herb seeds, plus many other unique and hard to find seeds. For a free catalog contact: Karen Siske, Johnny's Selected Seeds, Foss Hill Road, Box 2580, Department 598, Albion, ME 04910; telephone: 207-437-4395; fax: 1-800-437-4290.

New Technology - "Scare tape" is a polyester film, holographically printed with a pattern of circles resembling the eyes of owls. The tape "flashes" in the wind and is used to scare birds away from crops. For more information, contact: Walt Haller, Wildlife Control Technology, Inc., P.O. Box 151245, Cape Coral, FL 33915-1245; telephone: 1-800-235-0262.

Information @ \$5.95 Each - The Northeast Farmer to Farmer Information Exchange, a project of the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA), offers the proceedings (almost 30 pages each) of meetings held in 1992-93 on the following topics: apples, greenhouses, livestock, strawberries and sweet corn. Contact: Julie Rawson (check payable to NOFA), 411 Sheldon Road, Barre, MA 01005; telephone: 508-355-2853.

Field Tests Under Way - Faculty from Canada's University of Guelph's Department of Crop Science are growing transgenic canola, alfalfa and soybeans. Transgenic plants are those whose genetic makeup has been altered, specifically, when a gene from another plant or organism has been inserted into their DNA structure. Contact: Margaret Boyle, University Center, University of Guelph, Ontario, N1G 2W1, Canada; telephone: 519-824-4120, ext.3338.

Cassette Tapes - Audio tapes of the 1995 Ohio International Floral Short Course educational seminars are available. For a listing of the topics and ordering information, contact: Tammy Yellman, MAC Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 17105, Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017-0105; telephone: 1-800-347-2902; fax: 606-341-0130.

Grass - "*Turf Grass Trends*" an independent monthly newsletter for turf managers, costs \$120 per year. Contact: Jeanne Stanek, Turf Grass Trends, 1775 T Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-7124; telephone: 202-483-8873; fax: 202-483-5797.

Who Owns? - "An estimated 9.9 million private ownerships control 73 percent of the 490 million acres of timberland in the United States." (Branching Out, Summer, 1995, p. 1)

New - *The Edible Landscape*, four issues per year; \$12. "Money refunded if you're unhappy." Contact: Michael Veracka, The Edible Landscape, 115 Vandewater Street, Providence, RI 02908; telephone: 401-273-1197.

Tip - ALWAYS: clean knives, counters, cutting boards and your hands with hot, soapy water after contact with raw meats.

F.Y.I. - March is National Peanut Month! The average American eats 9 pounds of peanuts and peanut products every year.

Protect Yourself - Want another reason to wear sunscreen with an SPF factor of 15 or higher? As many as 25 percent of cold sores and fever blisters may be triggered by overexposure to sunlight.

Grazing - Joel Salatin in his new 368-page book "*Salad Bar Beef*" explains and illustrates how with small acreage you can enter the beef business profitably. The book costs \$30 and is complete-conception to slaughter-to market beef programs. Contact: Polyface, Inc., Route 1, Box 281, Swoope, VA 24479; telephone: 540-885-3590.

Have a Seat - Got an old farm vehicle with an iron seat? It might have value! The Cast Iron Seat Collectors Association was formed in 1973. For more information: Contact: Charlotte Traxler, RR2 Box 38, LeCenter, MN 56057, telephone: 612-357-6142.

Freezing Weather - Until thoroughly familiar with new equipment e.g., sprayers, pumps, etc., always remove all drain plugs and leave open a cap here and there to ensure complete drainage.

Caretakers - How does one get started in caretaking? Where does a farmer go to find caretakers? For a free report and more information, send a stamped self-addressed, #10 business-size envelope to the "Caretaker Gazette." Contact: Thea Dunn, 2380 NE Ellis Way, Suite C-16, Pullman, WA 99163-5303; telephone/fax: 509-332-0806.

Goat News - A subscription for the "*Goat Gab Rag*" is only \$10 per year for six issues. Contact: Ruth Smelser, 5857 Spanish Hill, Bryan, TX 77807; telephone: 409-778-3814.

Looking Ahead - With spring just around the corner, there is activity everywhere and these references will help you to understand the changes.

- *Animal Signatures*, 80 pages, \$9.95
- *Spring Wildflowers*, 156 pages, \$12.95
- *On Watching Birds*, 171 pages, \$11.95

Contact: Tracey Sanborn, Chelsea Green Publishing Co., 205 Gates-Briggs Bldg. P.O. Box 428, White River Junction, VT 05001; telephone: 802-295-6300, fax: 802-295-6444.

Write! - Free, "*Consumers Newslines*" is full of treats for the reader. Contact: Judy Harrold, Alltrista Consumer Products Company, Direct Marketing, Department CN, P.O. Box 20005, Muncie, IN 47307-0005; telephone: 317-281-5007; fax: 317-281-5403.

Available - Hear what you missed or review what you heard at the 12th S/CEA Hydroponic Growers Conference. To receive a listing of all presentations and the Audio Cassette Order Form, contact: Judy Bailey, CropKing, Inc., 5050 Greenwich Road, Seville, OH 44273; telephone: 216-769-2002, fax: 216-769-2616.

CSA Workbook - Available for \$10, "*Basic Formula to Create Community Supported Agriculture*" includes budgets, organizational details and recommendations. Contact: Robyn Van En, Indian Line Farm, RR3, Box 85, Jug End Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230; telephone: 413-528-4374.

Tip - "Cover crops are probably the cheapest and best way to prevent crust formation; and in the rainy season will act as a 'living mulch' that protects the soil surface from the impact of rain drops." (*The Cultivar*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Summer 1995, p. 12)

Kids/Gardening - Adults who enjoy gardening are frequently on the lookout for products and gifts that will encourage youngsters in this enjoyable pastime. A good source is the October 1995 issue of *Today's Garden*. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to obtain your copy. Contact: Mary Nielson, National Garden Bureau, Suite 310, 1311 Butterfield Road, Downers Grove, IL 60515; telephone: 708-963-0770.

Remember - If land is sloping and not contour-planted, it is important that all cultivation be performed across the slope and not up and down the slope.

Activity Books - Unique, the "Agriculture Color and Activity Book" is designed to entertain elementary school children while they are learning about American agriculture. The 40-page book costs \$1.25 with discounts for large quantity. Contact: ARC, Inc., 4210 Wam-Teau Drive, Wamego, KS 66547; telephone/fax: 913-456-9705.

Always - If growing your own transplants, use sterilized growing medium, sterilized flats, and general sanitary production techniques.

Suggestion - Read the article "A Farming Revolution" in the *National Geographic*, Vol. 188, No. 6, December 1995, p. 61-88.

Look Up! - Keep an eye on the sky. Cumulus clouds look like heaps of giant cotton puffs and are associated with fair weather. Cumulonimbus clouds are large towering cumulus clouds. They bring lightning and rain.

Never - Do not bend at the waist to pick things up; always bend at the knees!

Potato Pointers - "The potato tuber is a living plant. Even in its dormant state of rest, complex enzymatic changes and respiration occur." Ed Plissey (*American Vegetable Grower*, October 1995; p. 41)

Fresh Fruits - "The value of U.S. horticultural imports from Chile rose from \$40 million in 1980 to \$388 million in 1994. Off-season table grapes comprised almost 40 percent of the value of U.S. agricultural imports from Chile. Chile accounts for virtually all U.S. imports of fresh plums, and peaches, over 80 percent of table grapes, and more than 60 percent of the fresh pears and kiwi." (*The Cotton Gin and Oil Mill Press*, May 27, 1995, p. 3)

Tip - The ideal room temperature for keeping your Christmas poinsettias is not lower than 60 degrees F at night and not higher than 72 degrees F during the day.

Fire Control - *Property Owner's Guide to Reducing Wildfires* is a free six-page brochure designed to help people manage their land. Contact: Joni Ripple, College of Natural Resources, 160 Mulford Hall, UC Berkeley, CA 94720-3114; fax: 504-643-5429.

Costs \$5 - "*The Holistic Garden*" is a carefully crafted 60-page booklet that will interest homesteaders and vegetable gardeners alike. Contact: Clint Kraft, Aristera Publications, P.O. Box 3764, Redwood City, CA 94064-3764; telephone: 415-306-0170; fax: 415-364-2075.

Free - The *Consumer Information Catalog* is great food for thought because listed are more than 200 low-cost Government booklets on a variety of topics. Contact: Consumer Information Center, Department GT, Pueblo, CO 81009.

Looking - There are hundreds of organizations dedicated to the promotion of food that will be happy to send you free recipes. A directory of these organizations, "*1001 Free Recipes*" costs \$3 plus 2 stamps. Contact: Lynn Kerrigan, Page One, 134 Eachus Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-0194; telephone: 610-527-5654.

Obese Children - The cause is fat intake, not calorie intake. Doctors rarely recommend that children diet, instead they encourage them to eat healthful, low fat meals and snacks.

Now - Write for a free copy of the catalog "*More Profit From Your Grassland Can Start Now*." Contact: Alan Nation, *The Stockman Grass Farmer*, P.O. Box 9607, Jackson, MS 39286-9607; telephone: 1-800-748-9808, fax: 601-981-8558.

Popular - The publication "*Timber Management for Small Woodlands*" has been revised. The 57-page bulletin costs \$5. Contact: Media Services Resource Center, 8 BTP, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850; fax: 607-255-9873.

WORDS TO REMEMBER

"While there are many things in the life of the late Booker T. Washington that attracted, gripped, and held me, as I was constantly meeting him in various cities and while I spent many pleasant days as a guest in his home during the Sunday School Congresses which met at Tuskegee upon his invitation, the most striking thing was this:

'Each morning... I went with him into his poultry yard. I noticed... that he scattered the food for the chickens in the midst of a lot of leaves, grass, and other refuse matter. I asked him about it on the third morning. He did not reply.... But on the fifth morning he said, 'Henry Allen, you asked me why I throw this feed in the leaves and grass and the trash. I did it to make the chickens work for their living to keep them from being lazy. They are just like human beings. If they get their living without having to work for it, they will not develop. The same is true with you, young man, if you want to be useful, serviceable, and make a definite contribution to this present civilization of which we are a part, then you must not only exercise your muscles and build your body physically, but you must develop your mind and you must live a spiritual useful life.'

"I never forgot it. When I went down to his funeral and the unveiling of his monument, these words of his came back to me." (Henry A. Boyd, Nashville, Tennessee)

(Boyd's 1940 letter was taken from an unpublished collection of reminiscences compiled by Daniel T. Williams, Tuskegee University archivist). Source: (*Tuskegee Horizons*, Fall 1991, p. 31)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 13, 1996 - 18th Annual Dairy Goat Conference, University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus. Contact: Leon Meger, 405 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108; telephone: 1-800-367-5363 or 612-625-1214.

January 11-13, 1996 - 4th Annual National No-Tillage Conference, Adam's Mark Hotel, St. Louis, MO - Contact: No-Till Farmer, P.O. Box 624, Brookfield, WI 53008-0624; telephone: 416-782-4480, fax: 414-782-1252.

January 12-14, 1996 - Ohio Roadside Marketing Conference, Akron Hilton Inn West, Akron, OH. Contact: Lois Yarnell, 216 N. Vine Street, Westerville, OH 43081; telephone: 613-523-0801.

January 31-February 4, 1996 - 1st Annual 1996 Herb Business Winter Getaway Conference, Albuquerque Hilton, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: THGMN, P.O. Box 245, Silver Spring, PA 17575; telephone: 717-393-3295; fax: 717-393-9261.

February 4-8, 1996 - 50th Anniversary of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV. Contact: Robert E. Raschke, 9150 W. Jewell Ave., Suite 102, Lakewood, CO 80232-6469; telephone: 303-988-1810, fax: 303-988-1896.

February 11-14, 1996 - The North American Strawberry Growers Association (NASGA), Sutton Place Hotel, Newport Beach, CA. Contact: Bill or Treva Courter, NASGA, P.O.

Box 160, West Paducah, KY 42086; telephone/fax: 502-488-2116.

February 19-20, 1996 - Great Lake Grazing Conference, Stouffer Renaissance Hotel, Battle Creek, MI. Contact: Ben Bartlett, MSU Upper Peninsula, E3774 University Drive, P.O. Box 168, Chatham, MI 49816-0168; telephone: 906-439-5880, fax: 906-439-5698.

February 22-24, 1996 - The North American Farmer's Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) 1996 Conference, Sheraton Inn/City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY. Contact: Monika Roth, Tompkins County Education Center, 615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca, NY 14850-3555; telephone: 607-272-2292.

February 28-March 3, 1996 - North American Deer Farmers Association, The Worthington Hotel, Fort Worth, TX. Contact: Barbara Ramey Fox, 9301 Annapolis Road, #206, Lanham, MD 20706-3115; telephone: 301-459-7708.

March 1-3, 1996 - Sustainable Biointensive Mini-Farming Workshop, Willits, CA. Contact: Mary Campagna, Ecology Action, 5798 Ridgewood Road, Willits, CA 95490; telephone: 707-459-0150.

March 9-10, 1996 - Educational Conference - "Celebrate Diversity," Tompkins Cortland Community College, Dryden, NY. Contact: Ammie Chickering, NOFA-NY, P.O. Box 21, South Butler, NY 13154; telephone: 315-365-2299.

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